

2. UNRECORDED SOUNDS MADE BY THE TIGER

In his Miscellaneous Note at p. 494, Vol. 51 (2) of April 1953, R. C. Morris describes a vocal sound made by the tiger which he rightly notes as not having been previously recorded.

This voice sound, without the subsequent 'chuckles', was heard by me on the night of the 19th April 1925 in the Betul Forest Division of the C.P. It was mentioned by me in the typed pages of a preliminary draft for a General Index to the Society's Journals handed to the Honorary Secretary at Bombay on the 15th April 1953. In the section dealing with the tiger there is paragraph 81, 'Voice sounds made by the tiger'. In that was noted by me, 'There is one sound which can be only heard at night, and that is the tremendous blast of sound made by a tiger when he finds his near approach to his dragged "kill" stopped by ropes to which are attached pieces of cloth . . . it can be likened to the tremendous noise made by steam being let out in an engine shed.' This noise was on that night twice repeated and was obviously intended for intimidation, though there was in it also something of surprise and alarm.

Having accepted a buffalo calf and broken the tethering rope the tiger dragged the carcase about a hundred and fifty yards below the cart road and left it in a deep cleft in a nala. Shortly after dark that evening the tiger refused near approach, having, no doubt, suspicions of the 'bird's nest' machan built in the only available and somewhat inadequate tree. In the hope that a second 'live bait' would be taken—for the tiger again passed along the road during the night—arrangements were made, and the carcase in the nala covered under leaves and brushwood, and two ropes, in which were twisted pieces of white cloth, were stretched across the nala above and below the 'kill'.

The first tremendous blast was uttered about 8 o'clock when the first rope was encountered and the second some twenty minutes later when he met the other rope. After a further interval of about the same period there was the sound of tearing away of the brushwood and removal of the carcase which it was found in the morning had been done from beneath the lower rope. Having sufficiently 'intimidated' the ropes he had no fear of them. A beat by seventy men failed to find the tiger, which was left to enjoy the remainder of his life in well-deserved peace.

c/o LLOYDS BANK LTD.,

39 PICCADILLY,

LONDON, W.1,

September 23, 1954.

R. W. BURTON,

Lt.-Col. I.A. (Retd.)